

Russ proudly served his country in the United States Navy during World War II and as a lifelong member of the American Legion. Upon returning to Ulysses, he founded Binney Better Foods, Inc. For more than 40 years, Russ and his wife Virginia provided retail grocery service to the citizens of Grant County. In that time, Russ's business experienced and adapted to change. However, one thing remained constant: Russ's commitment to providing a quality product with first-rate customer service.

Russ served his community in additional ways. He was past president of the Ulysses Rotary Club and earlier this year received the Rotary 2000 Distinguished Service Award. Russ was a leader and former chairman of the Grant County Republican Party. He was a member and elder of the Shelton Memorial Christian Church. His devoted involvement in Gideon International strengthened his faith. In 1990, Russ' friends and neighbors recognized his many years of accomplished service by selecting him as the Grant County Citizen of the Year.

I have walked Main streets of many Kansas communities. In Ulysses, my objective was always to walk the business district with Russ Binney. Everyone liked you if you were with Russ. Always a smile and handshake for the men and a kiss for the women. He brightened everyone's day. No person in any Kansas town ever received a warmer reception than when Russ met one of his customers or neighbors.

Most important to Russ was his family. Over the course of their 54 years together, he and Virginia raised their son Cary and daughters Janet, Rhonda, and Tammy. They also devoted endless love and attention to seven grandchildren and seven great grandchildren.

Russell fulfilled many important roles in his life—each of them with integrity, compassion, and dedication. I join his many friends and admirers in extending my deepest sympathies to Virginia and her family during their time of loss.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 1654,
NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND
SPACE ADMINISTRATION AU-
THORIZATION ACT OF 2000

SPEECH OF

HON. ROBERT E. (BUD) CRAMER

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 14, 2000

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express very serious concerns about this legislation that we are considering on the floor today. Section 205 of this conference report prematurely directs NASA—and I stress the word “directs”—to establish a nongovernmental organization to manage microgravity research and commercialization activities aboard the International Space Station.

Mr. Speaker, in this Body the International Space Station does not have a stronger supporter than myself. While I sat on the Science Committee, I fought to fence-off microgravity research funds from hardware cost overruns and preserve the benefits of the Station for

our taxpayers. Year after year, I'm on this floor defending the Space Station against various wounding and killing amendments. But I'm concerned that unless we're careful, this language in Section 205 may move the taxpayer investments in Space Station backwards, rather than forwards.

This language was not considered during the normal House subcommittee or full committee markup process, but was added into the bill in conference. The House hasn't held any hearings on this matter. It's not even clear to me where NASA will get the funding for this initiative. What will happen to the government resources like the Station's new Payload Operations and Integration Facility at the Marshall Space Flight Center? Will there be a duplication of facilities at the taxpayer's expense?

It is just not obvious to myself and others how handing this work to the private sector would benefit the taxpayers or NASA. In fact, it could be detrimental. We've found that to be the case when NASA management was too far removed from two recently failed missions to Mars. By NASA Administrator Dan Goldin's own admission, NASA moved too far away from the actual work taking place on its programs. We must be careful to avoid making a similar mistake with the science operations aboard the Space Station. NASA civil servants look after the nation's interests and report to the NASA Administrator Dan Goldin, who answers to us—Congress. There are no guarantees that a non-governmental organization will look after the nation's interests or have any direct responsibility to this Body. Mr. Speaker, where is the accountability in this plan?

Some people argue that a non-governmental organization managing the Hubble Space Telescope at the Space Telescope Science Institute is working well. But its mission is mostly one of science management while the mission of this proposed organization would be one of commercialization—two very different animals. Common sense tells me that the introduction of commercialization into any process also introduces an entirely new set of unique and complex issues that need to be thoughtfully considered.

Mr. Speaker, I'm also concerned that the civil servants currently managing the NASA microgravity program have had little or no meaningful opportunity to comment on this plan. These are our Nation's experts on this issue, tasked to look out for the taxpayer's interests, and they've not even been given an opportunity to voice their thoughts on this action.

Mr. Speaker, I honestly don't know if this is a good or bad idea, but why is it being pushed through in such a hasty manner? Why are we prematurely directing NASA to implement this NGO, rather than coming back to us with a plan that can be examined in the light of day before we give them a green light? Mr. Speaker, if this really is good for our Nation, then nobody should object to holding hearings and giving this the thought that it truly deserves.

I will vote for this conference report today, because there are a number of provisions in it that will be good for our space program, but I am going to continue to try to work with my Colleagues to take a closer look at this plan to transfer Space Station responsibilities to a non-government organization.

BLUE RIBBON SCHOOL WINNER

HON. RANDY “DUKE” CUNNINGHAM

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 18, 2000

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Meadowbrook Middle School in Poway and its leaders, Principal, Susan Van Zant and Superintendent, Dr. Bob Reeves. Meadowbrook has been designated by the U.S. Department of Education as a National Blue Ribbon School for 2000. I am proud to inform my colleagues that my district had an amazing record of eleven schools selected for that prestigious honor this year. I would also like to note that the Academy of Our Lady of Peace right outside my district in San Diego County was also named a Blue Ribbon School. I applaud the educators, students and communities in each of the San Diego County schools who pulled together in pursuit of educational excellence.

Blue Ribbon Schools are recognized as some of the nation's most successful institutions, and they are exemplary models for achieving educational excellence throughout the nation. Not only have they demonstrated excellence in academic leadership, teaching and teacher development, and school curriculum, but they have demonstrated exceptional levels of community and parental involvement, high student achievement levels and strong safety and discipline.

After schools are nominated by state education agencies for the Blue Ribbon award, they undergo a rigorous review of their programs, plans and activities. That is followed with visits by educational experts for evaluation. Ultimately, those schools which best demonstrate strong leadership, clear vision and mission, excellent teaching and curriculum, policies and practices that keep the schools safe for learning, family involvement and evidence of high standards are selected for this prestigious award. I am pleased that they are now receiving the national recognition they are due.

As school and community leaders head to Washington for the Department of Education awards ceremony, I want to thank them once again for a job well done. More satisfying than any award, these leaders will have the lifelong satisfaction of having provided the best education possible and a better future for thousands of children. I am proud of what they have achieved, and want to share their achievements so that more people benefit from their accomplishments. I ask that a summary of Meadowbrook Middle School's superior work be included in the RECORD:

Located in Poway, California, Meadowbrook Middle School is an energetic and nurturing middle school where young adolescents are valued and respected. It is the school's vision that each student will master the knowledge, and develop the skills and attitudes essential for success in school and society. The staff is committed to providing a strong instructional program based upon high academic, behavioral, and social standards by the use of a challenging curriculum and supportive environment for sixth, seventh, and eighth graders. To achieve rigorous standards, the school